

We have been debating that contract for the last 11 months, and very frankly it has not gone very far. One of the reasons it has not gone very far is because the Republicans in the Senate could not agree with the Republicans in the House. Frankly, the Democrats have not been able to defeat or pass much on their own. We understand that, we are in the minority.

Now we come to funding Government. Personal responsibility would say that each and every one of us ought to share the most efficient and effective operations of the people's Government; reduce it, change it, eliminate some activities, do all of that, but ensure that those activities that we support operate in an efficient and effective manner. The Republican leadership has failed miserably in that effort. Because of Democrats? No. In the first instance, when this fiscal year ended September 30, the Republican leadership had failed to pass any appropriations bills to fund Government. Not 1 of the 13.

My colleague points out that perhaps we passed the legislative bill prior to the first of October, and that was, of course, vetoed because the President thought it unseemly that we take care of ourselves first before we took care of other people's business, and he made a good point.

The Republicans passed a short-term CR that expired, and they had yet to pass the appropriation bills that the President would sign and, indeed, as of today have seven bills that have yet to be passed into law.

Now, ladies and gentleman, we have come to a point where the President, President Clinton, the majority leader BOB DOLE, and the Speaker, NEWT GINGRICH, sat down together at the White House last night and said, "As reasonable people, let us work this out," and the reports I received this morning were that the Speaker thought that was a positive meeting. Senator DOLE, the majority leader, thought that was a reasonable meeting. The President of the United States thought that that was a positive, productive meeting, and the three leaders came out and said, "We think we have a construct to move forward."

And then what happened? The Republican freshmen apparently thought that was not enough. The Republican freshmen want a guarantee that the President would agree to certain things that he believes are not in the best interests of this country, cutting Medicare deeply, cutting Medicaid deeply, cutting education for young people, which he believes, and I share his views is an investment in the future of America, undermining programs that protect our environment.

In point of fact, in the last legislation we passed to keep Government working, both parties agreed that that would be part of it. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the freshmen Republicans have demanded that Government shut down until the President gives up.

That is not right.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. VOLKER. Mr. Speaker, is it out of order that anyone in this 5-minute time be given additional time under unanimous consent?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under special order speeches extensions of time are not allowed.

Mr. VOLKMER. I thank the Chair.

THE EFFECTS OF THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN ON FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, there is no good reason why 260,000 Federal employees should be shut out of their jobs, particularly at Christmastime. This is unprecedented to punish Federal employees because they chose to be civil servants. But that is what this body is doing. And to do it at Christmastime, when virtually all of these Federal employees have children, have been looking forward to Christmas, would like to be out shopping after they finish work each day, but they cannot. They do not know whether they will be paid.

They are aware of the press conference that the Speaker had where he alluded to the fact that a great many Republican Members of this body, particularly freshman, are opposed to reimbursing Federal employees for this period of time when they have been locked out of their jobs. Imagine the strain, imagine the anxiety, imagine the sadness on the part of their children when they see the toll this is taking on their parents.

I have been told by teachers, by one of the principals, in fact, of an elementary school in my district where a lot of Federal employees send their children, that their children are not acting like this is Christmas. Normally, you have pageants and children jumping up and down and squealing with laughter and looking forward in anticipation of Santa Claus. But we have stolen their Christmas from them this year, because their parents cannot afford to go out and buy presents. Their parents have no reason to be happy. Their parents do not know what is going to happen to them, because it is in our hands.

We control what this Christmas will be like for these thousands of Federal employees. And it is wrong. It does not have any reason to be tied to a 7-year balanced budget.

You know, you look back at history, when we have had conflicts between the majority in the Congress and the executive branch, when President Reagan had a conflict with the Democratic Congress in 1987, we went the whole year on a continuing resolution.

President Reagan never thought of sending Federal employees home and punishing them and locking them out of their job just because he could not agree with the Congress. Certainly, the Democratic Congress never for a moment thought that they would punish Federal employees like that.

In 1988 we had the same situation, a continuing resolution all year. And now we cannot even get a continuing resolution for the 3 days of Christmas, for this Christmas weekend. We cannot even get this continuing resolution to let Federal employees function and to open up the Government.

□ 1645

Why? Because certain Members on the Republican side of the aisle are saying "It is our way or no way." They just passed a resolution, I am told it was unanimous, I cannot believe it was unanimous because there are good people on the Republican side of the aisle, to say that there will not be a continuing resolution unless the President agrees to the entire 7-year balanced budget. It is wrong, it has got to stop, and the American people have to get to say no, this is not what we want from our Government.

AMERICANS SUPPORT PRESIDENT ON BUDGET IMPASSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COBLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FATTAH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I do not rise as normally when Members ask for an opportunity to revise their remarks and extend them. I would like my remarks to be recorded as I speak them. In this case, because I think that what we need to focus on is the simplest assertion of the truth.

We have a Republican majority that is trying to sell something that no one is buying. The American public has rejected, almost 2 to 1, their budget proposal for this Nation. They offer us on one hand a budget that would cut education, Head Start, Pell Grant opportunities for youngsters to go to college, increase the cost of student loans, and cut teacher training programs.

In every poll that has been done, the American public indicates that they do not agree with this budget. They are trying to sell a budget to the President of the United States, and he has vetoed it. He has said that he will not add his signature, he will not join in a conspiracy to rob this great country of ours from developing its fullest potential. He will not join in attempts to cut millions of young people in terms of their needs, in terms of health care and Medicaid, to further burden senior citizens and their families when they are in need of nursing home care. So, because the Nation and the President have rejected their budget product, they have

folded their hands and are now stuck in the same position they started out in, refusing to compromise, refusing to move toward some shared consensus about what direction our budget priorities should be as a country.

The U.S. Constitution is clear, and that is that laws have to be passed by the House and the Senate and signed by the President. I am not proud of the fact that I have been a Member of the least productive Congress in the history of our country in terms of actually passing legislation that moves on to the upper Chamber, or the other body, depending on how you like to phrase it, and then on to the President for his signature.

What we have here is a group of people who are now in the majority that seems to lack the maturity to be productive participants in shaping the course of public policy in our land. So, because their budget product has been rejected by the American people, they have decided to hold hostage 75 percent of the U.S. Government domestic programs.

So we come now on the eve of a holiday season, and many of my colleagues have pleaded for sympathy for Federal workers. I really would hope that we would understand their plight, but I think it is even more a compelling case to feel sympathy for the misguided priorities of the Republican majority. This is a defining moment I believe in this Congress. This shows clearly that they do not have what it takes in terms of being able to govern the people's house, to be responsible and reasonable in their actions.

So I would ask that as we reflect upon this moment in time, that we would think clearly about the opportunities that the new year will bring; for the American public to think anew about what type of person they would like to have in the U.S. Congress; to think anew about how we can further develop a more perfect union; to think anew about our responsibilities, as so eloquently outlined in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, in the preamble where it says to promote the general welfare, being our essential priority.

We have a lot to be thankful for in this land, and one of the things we have to be thankful for is that there is an election for Congress every 2 years, and that we will arrive at a point in which the American public will hold the trump card, and they will have an opportunity to make choices about what kind of country we really want to be and what kind of Nation we really want to move toward.

I would challenge each of us as we continue our work in this body to try to be more reasonable, to try to accommodate the differences of opinion that truly exist in terms of how to move our country forward, but always to be prepared, even in a moment in which we lack some degree of comfort, to stand firm for what we believe in, to stand up

for our principles, and for the democratic majority and for a President who has struggled to try to reason with an unreasonable majority of the Congress. I think we owe President Clinton a great degree of gratitude for his leadership for our Nation in our hour of need.

REASONS FOR THE BUDGET TURMOIL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I think this is an important time in this country. Many of our citizens are turning toward a very spiritual time. Many having been in the midst of celebration of Hanukkah, and others who are looking toward a celebration and commemoration of the birth of Christ.

The value of this Nation is that this holiday will be celebrated differently in many homes across this country. It is the wonderfulness of America, diversity of thought and religion, but a Constitution that applauds differences and recognizes the three branches of government. I think it is important to tell the American people why we are here today, on December 20, 1995, in the midst of turmoil without a budget.

This Congress started on January 4, 1995. I was sworn in as a new freshman, running on the issues of accountability and accessibility, and yes, responsibility, values that I hold very dear and very near to my heart and to my principles, and values that I represent to my constituents at every moment in interacting with them in my district visits.

But what happened to us that time in January and February and March? We were faced with something called a contract. Oh, it is so well for a while, but let me tell you, it was a gimmick. I do not know of any American who can say to me that they engaged and entered into a contract with anyone who was elected to the U.S. Congress.

There was some flag waving on the Capitol steps, and wannabees and others who were running for Congress at that time came up and made some sort of false representations about signing some document. But I would venture to say that even constituents in those districts did not sign any dotted line.

Oh, yes, they might have found exciting some very popular political issues that were raised about tort reform and crime off the streets, bashing the liberals and other such talk. But that is what it was, it was political gimmickry. And 37 percent of the people voted, so it was not that exciting anyhow.

But we spent 100 days and more in turmoil over the so-called contract, I call it on America. In the meantime, serious health reform did not occur. Many of us came here saying that we

could reasonably reform Medicare and Medicaid, not on the backs of senior citizens and children who need immunization and preventive health care, but really sit down to the table of reason and bargaining.

But out of this 100 days came a bashing and eliminating of the environmental protection laws that most Americans, Republicans and Democrats and Independents have grown to respect, the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act, and then the bashing of Medicare and Medicaid.

We should have had bills passed in April. We should have had all the appropriation bills passed by September or October 1. But what we have now is a quagmire of confusion. Republican proposed block grants which go to States, and when the money runs out and the needs of the people rise up, as we find in the natural disasters that have faced California, Texas, and Florida, among others, that have what we call natural disasters, we would not be prepared to assist those people. Do you think that is reasonable and the American people want that?

We now come to December 20 with no budget. That is what it is, plain and simple, folks. We had a gimmick called a contract. Out of that came one bill that was passed, and we now have no budget. And we have people trying to appropriate away America's values by intimidating us, by saying they stand for what America believes in.

The President, regardless of what your party may be, has an actual constitutional right to engage in this process. He has sat down with the leaders of the House and the Senate, and I might add, if you saw the media accounts, and they sure do reflect accurately many times people's expressions and views, those that came out of the meeting said we are on track.

Today we find out about an extremist position by freshmen Republicans that say all or nothing. We want to take the \$270 billion tax cut right now and we will stand on the backs of seniors and children, Medicaid and Medicare, and we do not want to reason. Yet the President spoke to the leadership and they said we are ready to sit down. Who is leading the leadership at this point? I am a Democratic freshman, and I am not going to let some other guy take the moral high ground on people in my community, Federal employees who give services, children who have sicknesses who need Medicaid. We must come together to recognize political gimmickry goes out the door, leadership stands up, get a budget, open the doors of this Government, right now, today. Pass a clean continuing resolution to open the doors of the Government and engage in budget talks that do not ask for \$270 billion out of Medicare and Medicaid simply to give the rich a tax cut.

That is the moral high ground.